

Dear confreres,

- **Introduction**

The globe continues to battle against the Covid-19 pandemic which has infected more than 10 million people worldwide and claimed more than 500 000 deaths globally and 2529 in South Africa alone. The next two months are said to be the most challenging ones as the country will reach the peak of Corona virus infections. I urge all of you to continue to be vigilant during these trying times caused by the national lockdown. However, these are moments to demonstrate our strongest resolve against this pandemic. By staying at home and wearing your face mask, you can save a lot of lives. Only go to public places for essential services.

In compliance with the Covid-19 regulations and protocols, the Monastery decided not to open the Church for public worship. Also, the Units of Mthatha and Mariannahill decided that confreres in Abbot Francis House should remain in the house during June/July vacation. Due to the easing down of lockdown regulations of level 3, the Monastery has opened its workshops (Blacksmith, Repository and Tailorshop) with limited numbers. The kitchen staff have also returned to work on rotational basis. The Retreat House remains closed.

I sincerely thank the novices and confreres who have demonstrated their commitment for the past three months as they took turns to cook and clean the Monastery facilities. I also thank the students in Abbot Francis House who are using their holiday time to renovate the house. Five students are assisting at Mariannahill Coolock House to erect the Stations of the Cross. We thank the rectors Frs. Vukani Masango CMM and Siyabonga Mbeje CMM for their collaboration and understanding.

- **Update on availing of our facilities for Covid-19 patients**

The consultations with the Department of Health (DOH) and St. Mary's Hospital regarding the availability of the Retreat House and the Mission Centre as possible sites for hosting Covid-19 patients have come to a standstill. Our legal team and insurance brokers assisted us in putting together a possible Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that could be signed between the Province and DOH and since then, the DOH has not come back for further discussion. I presume that they wanted to use our facilities free of charge but we had to ensure that we have a legal documents that indemnifies the Province from any legal issues that could be associated with our kind gesture of caring for the sick.

- **Confreres on home leav**
- **Derek Mwansa CMM** went for home heave in December 2019 and he was supposed to have returned to the country in March but due to the lockdown regulations he was unable to do so. We thank the Unit of Zambia that continues to host him in Kasembo Farms. Once the borders are open, he will travel back to the country. We thank God that his mother who was ill has since recovered.

- **Mathew Kim CMM** went for home leave in South Korea on the 12th May 2020. He will be home for three months. We hope that when his stay at home is over he will not experience same predicament as Fr. Derek.
- **Yves La Fontaine CMM** is still in Canada for more than a year now. When his one year ban was lifted in April, the Covid-19 lockdown regulations were already in place hence he could not begin the application process for a work permit in South Africa. We shall wait until the borders are opened again. We thank the Unit of US/Canada for hosting him.
- **New assignment**
- **Skhumbuzo Cyril Ngubane CMM** has been appointed the coordinating secretary the Department for Formation, Life and Apostolate of the Laity at the SACBC. I thank Fr. Ngubane for accepting this huge task and for accepting to leave St. Joseph's parish after completing the new parish house as well as many other outstanding projects. We are proud to avail yet another confrere to serve the SACBC. We wish Fr. Ngubane God's richest blessings in his new assignment.
- **Vukani Mbuso Masango CMM** has been appointed the new parish priest of St. Joseph's parish, Richmond. The Provincial Council is in the process to appoint an assistant priest. Fr. Masango continues to serve as a rector of Abbot Francis House until the end of his term in June next year. The process for seeking a new rector will begin soon. Thank you Fr. Masango for your availability.
- **Owen Jimu CMM** is taking care of Mariannahill Coolock House until the return of Fr. Mathew Kim CMM.
- **Crispin Graham CMM** continues as the administrator of the Monastery Retreat House until we find a new manager. The Retreat House and Mariannahill Coolock House remain closed to intake of groups until the lockdown regulations allow these premises to operate once again. We invite confreres who offer retreats and specialized programmes to the laity or religious and priests to please come forward as we wish to advertise CMM directed retreats and programmes when Covid-19 regulations ease and allow us to take new bookings. Frs. Vincent Mdabe CMM and Kevin Mapfumo CMM have availed themselves to be part of the team that offer programs or retreats.
- **Vincent Mdabe CMM** is the new administrator of Mater Dolorosa. His term of office begins at the end of July. While congratulating Fr. Mdabe on his new appointment, we sincerely thank His Grace Archbishop Emeritus Paul Khumalo CMM, who despite his retirement age, has faithfully served as the administrator of the house for the past four years. God bless you Mhlekezazi. Enjoy the well-deserved rest! Fr. Mdabe will continue to serve at the development office at Pfanner Centre.
- **Status of St. Joseph parish, Richmond**

As I had mentioned regarding the assignment of the new parish priest of Richmond, I had a chance to renew our consultation with His Lordship Bishop Mlungisi Dlungwane concerning the official documentation entrusting the parish to our pastoral care. In principle he agrees to do so, but he cannot do it at the moment as they await the response from the Holy See following the Apostolic Visitation in diocese early this year.

As a sign of his commitment, Bishop Dlungwane accepted in writing our vision to avail the parish to CMM to have our students from Abbot Francis House do their pastoral work at the parish. He also accepts that the Congregation can institute its candidacy/postulancy programme in the parish property since we have lost Mariathal mission.

It is our vision as a council that St. Joseph's parish should serve as a centre for offering specialized apostolates of lay training and specialized apostolates in the Diocese since the property belongs to us. For that to happen we need to have a strong team of confreres working in that parish. We are grateful to Fr. Ngubane who built a double storey parish house on our property which makes it possible for a community to live there. Also, Fr. Dominic Muheim built a house there which could be used to house the candidates. Mrs. Emelia Mdunge donated a four bedroom house to the Province which is rented by Mr. Konrad Govender and his family. This house can also be used for our training and formation projects.

- **New candidates**

We have admitted two new candidates. Their names are Mr. Athi Doko from Kokstad and Mr. Mlekeleli Beatus Chiliza from Mariannahill Diocese. After spending two weeks at the Monastery, the candidates left for Mthatha to join the combined candidacy with the Unit of Mthatha. Bro. Bernard Isanda CMM is their director. We appreciate this collaboration with Mthatha Unit. Please put our candidates in your prayers. We sincerely thank the formation team who have journeyed with the candidates before joining us.

- **Vusumuzi Bernard Sokhela**

In a letter dated 3 March 2020, Prot.n. 57366/2020, the Holy See granted the petition of Fr. Vusumuzi Bernard Sokhela to be incardinated into the Diocese of Mariannahill. In a letter dated 11 May 2020, the Bishop of Mariannahill, Mlungisi Pius Dlungwane, confirmed the acceptance and incardination of Fr. Sokhela into the Diocese. Fr. Vusumuzi Bernard Sokhela is therefore no longer a member of our congregation since his incardination is juridically established by the acceptance of the Bishop. We pray for God's guidance in the future endeavor of our brother.

- **Cancellation of events due to Covid-19 pandemic**

- **The Preparation for Perpetual Profession Programme (PPPP)** by the General Government for Jun/July 2020 has been cancelled until next year June. In the meantime the Units of Mthatha and Mariannahill have organized a PPPP course for our students who are due for perpetual profession. We thank formators at Abbot Francis House for putting together a very solid programme. We thank the confreres and other religious and lay people who have availed themselves for giving inputs to our confreres during this extensive preparation period for their perpetual profession. The same programme will also run for our confreres in Mozambique.

- **The Council of Congregation CocC** that was scheduled for Mariannahill in October this year has also been canceled. The workshop for Unit Treasures which was to precede this meeting was cancelled too.

- The official closure of Jubilee of 110 years death anniversary of Abbot Francis Pfanner on the 18th October 2020 has been cancelled. The General Governments of the CMM and CPS were the hosts of this event and they had invited the SACBC bishops to be part of the celebration. We shall still celebrate the official closure of the jubilee year on the date to be still announced. We wish to invite all the parishes which the Jubilee Cross and candle has visited since last year. As part of the closure of the jubilee year:

Our students in Abbot Francis House have a project of selling key holders with the theme of 110 years death anniversary of Abbot Francis Pfanner. The aim is to boost the student fund but also to support the Province. Each key holder costs R35. The available colour for now is blue. I appeal to you confreres to support this project of our fratres by buying these keyholders or encouraging the parishioners and CMM Associates to buy them especially before the official closure of the jubilee year.

We have left the July Feast (27 July) and CMM annual retreat (6-12 September) dates intact until the President of the country addresses us on further lockdown regulations.

- **List for CMM birthdays Province**

Fr. Sbusiso Mkhize has put together the calendar containing the dates for all birthdays of our confreres in the Province. We encourage you to send your name feast day to him so that he can complete this important task. We need to remember our confreres in our prayers when they celebrate their special days.

- **Condolences**

Kindly remember in your prayers our five CPS sisters who died in Mthatha recently. Also, we remember Fr. Sizwe Nxasana of Mariannhill Diocese who passed on last week. I represented the Province at his Requiem Mass in Maristella parish on the 27th June 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 regulations I could not attend the funeral of the CPS sisters in Mthatha. It is important to note that one of the sisters who died, Sr. Maria-Corda Wladhoer CPS served as a member of the Pfanner historical commission for the beatification of the Founder. Few days after her death, Professor Joy Brain who also served as a member of the same commission passed on at the age of 94. These are two great women of faith and we mourn their deaths as CMM and we are grateful for their services. Please remember them in your prayers.

We recommend to your prayers Mr. Dinis Andre Vilanculo, the father of Fr. Tiago Vilanculo CMM who passed away on 29 June. We also recommend Mrs. maMahlaba Khumalo, the sister in law of Archbishop emeritus Paul Khumalo who passed away on the 17th June. Due to Covid-19 regulations, our confreres were not able to bury their loved ones. Please remember them in your prayers.

- **Congratulations**

I heartily congratulate Bro. Mauricio Langa CMM who was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. His thesis is entitled *Black African parents and school history: A narrative inquiry*. We have two copies at the Archives and one at the Monastery if confreres wish to read the thesis which I highly recommend. I thank Fr. Lawrence Mota CMM and the Monastery community for celebrating this special achievement with Bro. Dr. Mauricio Langa CMM in our recreation room on the 14th June 2020. It was a very beautiful celebration and Fr. Kevin Mapfumo CMM was the Master of Ceremony.

- **Updates**

- We heartily welcome Fr. Callistus Ngcobo who has returned to the Monastery after his leave of absence ended.
- It is with great sadness that we communicate to you that since first day of lockdown Fr. Nkosinathi Dlamini CMM has been missing from the Monastery. Through the assistance of Bishop Jose' Luis of Swaziland, we have traced Fr. Dlamini to be at home in Swaziland. We hope that he will return to the community after the national lockdown. Please keep him in your prayers.
- On the 09th June 2020 I attended the Chrism mass for the Diocese of Mariannhill. I represented religious in the Diocese as the celebration took place at the Bishop's private chapel in the Chancery which could only take 8 priests. At the end of Mass, the Bishop spoke fondly of the role that has been played by the CMM in the Diocese and he urged us to continue ministering to the diocese with zeal. He acknowledged the past disharmony and pleaded that we put that in the past. The way he has handled the exchange of CMM personnel in Richmond is real a demonstration of his commitment to me. Let us pray that this is the beginning of the restoration of our fraternal relationship with the Diocese.

Yours faithfully

Fr. Bheki Shabalala CMM

Provincial Superior